

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE STRATEGIC SURGE IN IRAQ: PRETENSE OR PLAN FOR SUCCESS?

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 30 MAR 2007		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Strategic Surge in Iraq Pretense or Plan for Success?				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Woodrow Radcliffe				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 20	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Woodrow S. Radcliffe

TITLE: The Strategic Surge in Iraq: Pretense or Plan for Success?

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 5 March 2007 WORD COUNT: 5,316 PAGES: 20

KEY TERMS: War Powers Act, Powers of Congress, Military Opposition, Will of the People, DIMEFIL, Operation Iraqi Freedom

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Less than nine months into his first term as President of the United States, George W. Bush was faced with the latest test of U.S. military might after the terrorist attacks in New York City on 11 September 2001. Thus began the prosecution of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). After a rapid, successful, multinational coalition military campaign in Afghanistan, President Bush pursued the second leg of the GWOT in Iraq on 19 March 2003. With limited numbers of U.S. and Coalition armed forces, the simultaneous conduct of Phase III and Phase IV operations throughout Iraq would stagnate.

By the end of 2006, the security situation was spiraling out of control in the Iraqi capital. It was apparent that an adjustment in operational strategy was necessary. On 10 January 2007, President Bush announced a change of strategy in the prosecution of OIF by proposing a surge of U.S. troops to succeed in the decisive ideological struggle of our time. The surge is the beginning of a shift in the strategy to bring security and stability to Iraq.

THE STRATEGIC SURGE IN IRAQ: PRETENSE OR PLAN FOR SUCCESS?

For strategy is concerned not merely with the movement of forces - as its role is often defined - but with the effect.

—B.H. Liddell Hart¹

Background

Less than nine months into his first term as President of the United States, George W. Bush was faced with the latest test of U.S. military might after the terrorism attacks in New York City on 11 September 2001. Thus began the prosecution of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), first in Afghanistan, then in Iraq. After a rapid, successful, multinational coalition military campaign in Afghanistan, President Bush pursued the second leg of the GWOT in Iraq on 19 March 2003.

In less than two months, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) had toppled the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. Though the strategic objectives were primarily Regime Change and Eradication of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), no WMDs were found. Phase III, Decisive Combat Operations, transitioned to Phase IV, Post-Conflict Operations, and the remainder of President Bush's first and second terms would largely be marked by ongoing prosecution of OIF. With limited numbers of U.S. and Coalition armed forces, the simultaneous conduct of Phase III and Phase IV operations throughout Iraq would stagnate, thus leading to a protracted attempt to win peace.

By the end of 2006, it was apparent that an adjustment in operational strategy was necessary if there was to be any possibility of success in Iraq. On 10 January 2007, President Bush formally announced a change of strategy in the prosecution of OIF by proposing a "surge"² of U.S. troops in an attempt to succeed in "...the decisive ideological struggle of our time."³

Though he was denigrated by the Department of Defense, increasing the number of troops apportioned to OIF was a basic premise to success in Iraq first proposed by U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki in 2003. During testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 25 February 2003, General Shenseki intimated that "something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers are probably, you know, a figure that would be required. We're talking about post-hostilities control over a piece of geography that's fairly significant, with the kinds of ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems. It takes a significant ground force presence to maintain a safe and secure environment, to ensure that people are fed, that water is distributed, all the normal responsibilities that go along with administering a situation like this."⁴

Declaration of War

As specified by the Constitution of the United States of America (Constitution), the power to declare war is the sole responsibility of the United States Congress. Throughout American history, Congress has declared war on five occasions. Beginning in 1812, Congress declared war against Britain to prosecute the War of 1812. The other declarations of war include the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II⁵.

After the campaigns in World War II and while involved in the stability and reconstruction of Europe, Congress was unwilling to declare war against North Korea when President Harry Truman began a limited war in 1950. Claiming the Constitutional authority as Commander in Chief to engage U.S. armed forces, President Truman did not seek a declaration of war. He maintained his Constitutional authority under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, to utilize American combat forces for police actions. Thus began the perceived presidential power to deploy U.S. armed forces without a formal, Congressional declaration of war.

The next informal declaration of war by a U.S. President was the Vietnam War. Initiated by President Kennedy and continued by Presidents Johnson and Nixon, the Vietnam War was waged without the approval of Congress. Largely because of the enormous financial costs and American bloodshed, Congress passed into legislation Public Law 93-148, The War Powers Act of 1973 (WPA). The WPA specifically limits presidential power to wage war without Congressional approval. This law mandates that when a President involves the U.S. in hostilities, he must consult Congress prior to the beginning and throughout until the point in time when U.S. forces are no longer involved. If within 60 days of the beginning that Congress has neither formally declared war nor passed a resolution authorizing use of force, the President must disengage these forces.

The Constitution divides the powers of the Executive Branch and Legislative Branch in their responsibilities involving U.S. armed forces. In Article I, Section 8, the Legislative Branch is empowered to declare war and to support the U.S. armed forces. In Article II, Section 2, the President is designated as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. "It is generally agreed that the Command in Chief role gives the President power to repel attacks against the U.S. and makes him responsible for leading the armed forces."⁶

In October 2002, the Congress authorized use of U.S. armed forces against Iraq by passing Public Law 107-242, Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002. This law, or authorization, specifically authorized President Bush to deploy forces to Iraq and was utilized to begin prosecution of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003.

On 19 March 2003 the Iraq War started and progressed to a rapid tactical victory. On 1 May 2003 aboard the flight deck of the USS Lincoln, President Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq. The military leadership anticipated a bold transition in the application of the elements of national power and prepared equipment and troops to return home. However, U.S. armed forces remained in Iraq and in the years to follow, would simultaneously conduct Phase III and Phase IV operations. Major combat operations had ended and that the war had been won, but the struggle to win the peace was only beginning. This struggle would prove to be much harder and more costly than the original invasion.

Powers of Congress

As an equal branch of government, the Legislative Branch has the power to influence the Executive Branch in the use of U.S. armed forces in hostilities. These powers include formal declarations of war, impeachment, Congressional hearings, subpoena of documents, resolutions, debate, oversight, scrutiny, withdrawal of funding, passing law, overriding presidential vetoes, and reconsideration of previously passed resolutions. Though there are other tools available in the Congressional toolkit, these techniques and procedures form the basis of Congressional checks and balances, oversight, and power sharing.

As a freely elected, equal third of the U.S. government and given their Constitutional duty to “support and defend,”⁷ the 108th and 109th Congress did not exercise their Constitutional responsibilities to hold the President in check regarding the Iraq War. According to Indiana University’s Center on Congress, “the nation’s top lawmakers are excessively partisan, fail to hold the executive branch in check and deserve a paltry C-minus for their overall performance.”⁸ This grade was applied as the overall grade for the full spectrum of Congressional duties. “However, Congress received D’s for both excessive partisanship and failing to hold the executive branch in check.”⁹ According to the Research Director of the Center on Congress, Edward Carmines said, “because of its internal dysfunctions and lack of aggressiveness in dealing with the executive branch, it’s [Congress] often seen as subservient to the president.”¹⁰

Leading up to the Congressional elections of 2006, challengers to the incumbents seeking reelection utilized political rhetoric focusing on the perceived lack of success in Iraq. Campaign platforms centered on the results of President Bush’s Iraq strategy. No matter how competent, the U.S. military was said to be prosecuting the Iraq War based on a flawed strategy. If elected, promises were made to reassert the co-equal power of the Legislative Branch to change the failed strategy of the President. The Democratic Party challengers promised action if only they were elected in sufficient numbers to take back the majority in the Congress. The Republican

Party incumbents claimed that opposing rhetoric was hollow and that the Democrats had no strategic plan to counter the strategies being executed by the U.S. armed forces. The Senate Majority Leader of the 110th Congress, Senator Harry Reid, summed up the Democratic Party opposition to the failing strategy by saying, "It simply is a war that will not be won militarily. It can only be won politically."¹¹

The 2006 Congressional elections marked a turning point in the wartime posture of the President. For the first time in 12 years, both houses of Congress would be controlled by the Democrats. The elections had initiated a wholesale change in the political landscape and would require President Bush to begin making changes in his administration. Prior to the elections, the President had been a staunch and loyal supporter of Department of Defense (DoD) Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. On the day following the elections, he was replaced. After having majority support in both houses of Congress for six years, the President was now faced with his role as the leader of the new minority party and as a lame duck President who's strategy in Iraq was clearly off track. Previously emboldened to trudge forward under the limited-scale, military-centric strategy supported by Secretary Rumsfeld, President Bush realized that his current strategy was not going to continue to receive political and popular support. An unnamed administration policy aide commented, "Given an ample supply of patience on the part of the American people, [the current strategy] would work. However, the President knows that there's not an ample supply of patience on the part of the American people...so he has to change the dynamic...Does he do it by reducing troops and withdrawing, or does he change the mix in a different way?"¹²

That question was answered on 10 January 2007 when President Bush announced a surge of U.S. armed forces in Iraq and a change in operational strategy to counter the increasing sectarian violence in Iraq. For the first time, President Bush publicly admitted that the strategy being employed in Iraq was a failure.

Reacting confidently to the tactical successes of the initial months of OIF, President Bush commented in the summer of 2003, "There are some who feel like -- that the conditions are such that they can attack us there. My answer is, bring them on. We've got the force necessary to deal with the security situation."¹³ By the end of 2006, the security situation was spiraling out of control in the Iraqi capital, threatening the country further into a sectarian civil war. If the security situation could not be brought under control, then there was to be no way for the elected Iraqi national government to gain the legitimacy. Without security, no further progress could be made.

Not only was Secretary Rumsfeld replaced, but the military chain of command began to be changed. The Commander of U.S. Central Command, General John Abizaid, was replaced by Admiral William Fallon. The Commander of Multinational Forces – Iraq, General George Casey, would be replaced by General David Petraeus. With a new team in place who supported the new surge strategy, President Bush began the escalation of troops into Iraq while delaying the scheduled redeployment of units already present.

Military Opposition

Prior to the 10 January 2007 Presidential announcement of the proposed surge of troops into Iraq, senior military leaders had been expressing reservations with the anticipated change in operational strategy. “Both Abizaid and Casey have expressed qualms in recent weeks about boosting U.S. forces in Iraq. Abizaid said an increase of 20,000 could not be sustained for long by the overburdened American military, and Casey said such a boost should be used to advance U.S. strategic goals.”¹⁴ The issue of the U.S. military being overburdened had been exacerbated over the past three years.

The concerns expressed by senior military leaders were multi faceted arguments rather than a collective focus on any specific proposal. One argument was that additional U.S. armed forces deployed to Iraq may have the unintended effect of lessening the Iraqi resolve to accept responsibility for the security of Iraq. Another position argued that the pace of world-wide deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other numerous small scale contingencies had overtaxed the force structure of the U.S. armed forces. Some leaders had expressed concern that a proposed surge of troops to Iraq should be articulated and should be measurable. Others worried about the implications of a post-surge landscape unless “a larger, government-wide strategy to mend a broken country”¹⁵ is not planned, developed, and set into motion. Another aspect of military opposition attributed to Generals Abizaid and Casey was that “they do not want more U.S. troops. They want more Iraqi troops, and they know the Army and Marine Corps cannot sustain 30,000 additional troops in Iraq.”¹⁶ One common theme of concern for senior military leaders had been that the military element of national power had been tasked to “shoulder the entire load while U.S. government agencies better suited for reorganizing political and economic systems have dropped the ball.”¹⁷

Will of the People

Following the 11 September 2001 al-Qaida terrorist attacks in New York City, the American population was stunned and angered. Soon afterward, U.S. armed forces attacked the Taliban in Afghanistan with the overwhelming support of the American people and the

international community at large. The will of the American people was focused on revenge against Osama bin Laden and his followers for the cowardly surprise attacks.

Simultaneous with operations in Afghanistan, planning was taking shape to attack Iraq. The American citizenry was slowly being convinced that the oppressive, secular regime of Saddam Hussein was the root of terrorist evils. This evil was waiting for the right moment to attack the U.S., most likely with WMDs.

As the Bush administration continued the diplomatic press to convince the United Nations to support U.S. military intervention in Iraq, the resolve of the American people strengthened toward a preemptive attack against the Hussein regime. The new American enemy was radicalism, global terrorism, and WMD.

The 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America detailed strategy to counter states possessing WMD in order to “deter and defeat against the threat before it is unleashed.”¹⁸ On 1 June 2002, President Bush said, “The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends—and we will oppose them with all our power.”¹⁹ Congress too was convinced. By October, the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 was law and the will of the people was rock solid.

As OIF progressed, the security situation in Iraq deteriorated. So too had the will of the American people. While the public was initially supportive of U.S. military intervention in Iraq, public support began to weaken in late 2005 and throughout 2006. Although President Bush repeatedly told the U.S. public that lasting progress was being made in Iraq, the American population was constantly inundated with real-time media reports showing little semblance of progress. Local media outlets covered the funerals and burials of young American men and women who had made the ultimate sacrifice. Local RC units were preparing for and departing for second tours of duty in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. The American public began to understand the potential duration of the “Long War”²⁰ that so many military officers and government officials had already come to realize.

The overall security and strategic situation in Iraq appeared to be getting better during 2005 after an interim national government was installed, after a constitution was written, and after free and open elections were held in Iraq for the first time in many years. But when the freely elected government failed to perform as a functional government, the security situation

began to deteriorate. As 2005 became 2006, the country began to fall apart. The two issues that contributed to the worsening security situation included “the failure of the 2005 election process to produce any sense of progress”²¹ and the “February 22 bombing of the hallowed Shia mosque in Samarra.”²² Ethnic tensions flared and the Iraqi population began to identify themselves exclusively in ethnic, sectarian, and tribal affiliations rather than as free Iraqis.

More enlightened than ever, the American population began to demand political action and accountability. By November 2006, the people’s perception was that there were few positive outcomes developing in Iraq even though the President repeatedly attempted to detail progress was being made. U.S. Congressional mid-term elections resulted in “the nation’s voters handing both houses of Congress to the Democrats in an election that reflected deep discontent with the war in Iraq.”²³

By the end of 2006, the once supportive opinion of the American public had fallen to the point that “the election was a repudiation”²⁴ of the President’s handling of the Iraq War. However, Congress fared no better. The American public had little confidence in its governing abilities and a Gallup survey indicated a low public standing for Congress at “21 percent.”²⁵ Though the will of the people had shifted away from war, the people had not anointed a political winner. Polls conducted in late 2006 “showed Americans remain frustrated with Bush’s handling of the war, but don’t think Democrats have offered much of an alternative.”²⁶

The change in strategy and the surge of troops would further define the American will. Discussions at all levels of civilian, military, and governmental society provided more information to the American public related to the Iraq War than in any of the previous four years. The new Democrat-controlled 110th Congress finally decided to govern in relation to Iraq War issues as the President laid out his new plan for victory in Iraq.

Changes in Strategy

Given the U.S. strategic objectives and with Iraq’s geographical location in the Middle East, U.S. prior knowledge of its explosive culture, and basic planning assumptions related to the instability of the Iraq governmental structure anticipated to remain, many of the issues faced should not have been treated with expressions of surprise. The previous Phase IV strategic approach had failed.

The strategic goals in Iraq are “a unified democratic federal Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, and is an ally in the War on Terror.”²⁷ The surge or the “new phase”²⁸ is the beginning of a shift in the strategy to bring security, beginning in Baghdad and Anbar Province. Even though this surge has been hinted to be a six month process, the

National Security Council states that the new objectives “are achievable in the next 12 – 18 months.”²⁹

The key changes in this new phase are varied and appear to be less military-centric than previous strategic efforts. Among the changes is a shift to place Iraqis in the lead in ensuring success as the U.S. transitions to a supporting role. The primary mission will be to help the Iraqis provide security to the population. U.S. civil and military efforts will be further integrated and U.S. armed forces will be fully embedded into the Iraqi developed, regional approach strategy that is vital to success.³⁰

These “major strategic shifts”³¹ lean strongly to the Diplomatic side of the seven elements of national power: Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Finance, Intelligence, and Law Enforcement (DIMEFIL). DIMEFIL are the tools of U.S. national security policy and must be utilized in order to meet long term strategic goals.

The military aspect of DIMEFIL in the major strategic shift is the surge of 21,500 troops into Baghdad and the Anbar Province during 2007 and will continue to be the element of national power most utilized to secure the peace in Iraq. As part of this new strategy, various “operational shifts”³² and “tactical shifts”³³ will occur to better facilitate security.

The primary focus of the operational shift will be on the establishment of security. Previously, the U.S. security focus was training the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), developing the security plan, leading ISF in the execution of the plan, and embedding minimal military with ISF units. With the implementation of the surge, the U.S. will shift the responsibility for security to the Iraqis. The security plan for Baghdad will be Iraqi-developed and led with the focus on having the ISF provide population security. Throughout this security phase, the responsibility for security will be transferred to the Iraqi government. To increase ISF and Coalition effectiveness, less restrictive rules of engagement will be developed to eliminate political and sectarian restrictions during future security operations.

To facilitate this shift, the U.S. armed forces will increase the embedding of U.S. units into ISF formations in Baghdad and the Anbar Province. One U.S. brigade will embed with each Iraqi division. During this 12 – 18 month phase, the established Coalition will transfer all Iraqi battlespace and provincial control to the Iraqi government. The previous goal for manning the ISF had been to establish the ISF end strength at 325,000. In an effort to purge the Iraqi police forces of corruption and foreign infiltrators, the new focus will be to expand the ISF end strength while conducting a top to bottom review of the Iraqi police forces.

The proposed diplomatic shift is also significant. No longer will U.S. diplomacy focus primarily on the federal level of Iraqi government. The way forward will now include a new

commitment to political developments at the local levels of government, those far outside of the international Green Zone. Focused efforts will be made to provide assistance to revive and to restore vital functions of provincial governance.

Additionally, the political and economic presence outside of Baghdad will double in scope in order to support the efforts of security at the local levels of Iraqi society. Once local security is established, it is believed that local services will improve. When basic local services improve, fewer Iraqis will depend on militias to provide these services and local employment will increase. As the local situations begin to stabilize, the extremists will become marginalized and much less effective. This process will be facilitated by integrating the civilian elements of national power into the planning and execution of field operations throughout Iraq.

The tactical shifts associated with the military surge will be substantial and bilateral. Iraqi government commitments include expansion of its Army by 30,000 troops, willingness to deploy its forces throughout the country, moving three additional Iraqi Army brigades to Baghdad, pursuit of law breakers regardless of religious, sectarian, or tribal affiliations, and not imposing political restrictions in the operations of the ISF.

Likewise, the U.S. commitments will mandate new tactical strategies. Five additional Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) totaling 17,500 troops will be sent to Baghdad with an additional 4,000 troops sent to Anbar Province. National Guard units will be remobilized and deployed for year long deployments. An increase in the number of U.S. forces embedded with ISF units will also occur. In order to achieve the goals of the operational shifts, the number of Department of State-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams will double and will be integrated with U.S. BCTs in most areas of operation.

Other U.S. key policy shifts include allocating \$1.2 billion to create new jobs for Iraqis in order to support operations in Baghdad and Anbar. On the regional diplomatic front, a new shift will be to begin regional coordination of an International Compact. The concept is to gain support for the Iraqi government from many of the Arabic regional partner nations throughout the Middle East. This International Compact with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Gulf States will be to strengthen a regional coalition to counter the threat of extremists.

Specifically excluded from this regional coalition approach will be Iran and Syria. Even though the Iraq Study Group recommended that the U.S. should “engage its adversaries and enemies to try to resolve conflicts and differences consistent with its own interests. Accordingly, the Support Group should actively engage Iran and Syria in its diplomatic dialogue, without preconditions.”³⁴

In accordance with the President's new strategy and in contradiction to this recommendation, both Iran and Syria will be excluded from diplomatic discussions in the region. In addition to the exclusion, any Iranian or Syrian actions that are perceived by the U.S. to be targeting Coalition forces will meet U.S. countermeasures.

According to President Bush, this new approach to the U.S.-supported Coalition strategy is comprehensive and can succeed. He further reported that "our military commanders reviewed the new Iraqi plan to ensure that it addressed these mistakes. They report that it does. They also report that this plan can work."³⁵

Counterstrategy and Opposition to the Surge

Many members of Congress tend to agree on one premise. There is no military solution to the growing sectarian violence in Iraq. Senator Norm Coleman of Minnesota said, "Baghdad needs reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis. It doesn't need more Americans in the crosshairs."³⁶ Others suggested "that the surge cannot work because it proposes a military solution to what is primarily a political problem."³⁷ This same sentiment seems to be a theme echoed by some military leaders. "There is a widespread feeling that the Pentagon has shouldered the entire load in Iraq while U.S. government agencies better suited for political and economic systems have dropped the ball."³⁸ David Apgar of the Boston Globe added, "this may be what top Pentagon generals mean when they say the only solutions for Iraq are political as opposed to military ones."³⁹

The prevailing sentiment among Congress and the American people was opposed to the surge. The new Democratic majority in Congress suggested a phased or immediate withdrawal with few recommendations on what the U.S. should do next. The result could leave an Iraqi population to fend for themselves in a country that has been thrown into chaos because of a U.S. strategic decision to force regime change. The decision to liberate Iraq from a brutal dictator and to rid the regime of WMDs was said to be "quite possibly the greatest foreign policy mistake in the history of our nation,"⁴⁰

As with any proposed political plan, there are counter proposals. Pundits, skeptics, and politicians have introduced ideas into the public arena for consideration. Chief among many members of Congress in Washington was the move to withdraw all U.S. forces from Iraq. The "phased or partial withdrawal from Iraq would entail pulling troops back to their bases across the country, or leapfrogging backward to the nearest international border, or redeploying to bases in nearby countries."⁴¹ Opinions suggested the beginning of a withdrawal of U.S. troops of

between four to six to 12 months. Others in Congress supported the surge of U.S. armed forces as part of an “overall plan of troop reduction”⁴² to begin “in the next four to six months.”⁴³

According to a December 2006 Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll, the American people favored the establishment of a timetable to pull troops out of Iraq. “Fifty two percent of Americans favored a fixed timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq.”⁴⁴ A CNN poll showed 21% favored “an immediate withdrawal.”⁴⁵

Former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell suggested the way forward must include a shift in U.S. policy with diplomacy in favor of engaging both Iran and Syria. “We’re not winning; we are losing. We haven’t lost. And this is the time, now, to start to put in place the kinds of strategy that will turn this situation around.”⁴⁶ Senator Joseph Lieberman, who supported an increase of U.S. troops in Iraq, added, “establishing security there will open possibilities for compromise and cooperation on the Iraqi political front – possibilities that simply do not exist today because of the fear gripping all sides.”⁴⁷ He further added, “the addition of more troops must be linked to a comprehensive new military, political and economic strategy that provides security for the population so that training of Iraqi troops and the development of a democratic government can move forward.”⁴⁸

Other than a comprehensive U.S. strategy involving a coordinated interagency approach, one suggestion is to implement a “two-state solution in Iraq.”⁴⁹ This approach would divide Iraq into two distinct partitions. Iraq would be geographically divided from southwest to northeast. The lower portion of Iraq would become predominantly traditional Shia, include the Shia holy cities of An Najaf and Karbala, and include the southern oil fields in Basra. The northern portion would consist of 40% Sunni, 20% Shia, and 40% Kurds, include all of Baghdad, and include the northern oil fields in Kirkuk. In theory, this northern partition would marginalize the political clout of any political, religious, or tribal group and would provide an abundance of oil wealth for all the population. The northern portion, while 60% Arab, would be able to capitalize on the remaining industrial and agricultural infrastructure to become the economic powerhouse of the Middle East. It also downplays the concerns of neighboring countries, particularly from Turkey. The southern partition would likely align with Iran and may result in a political structure similar to Saudi Arabia.

One of the few plans offered up by Congressional members comes from Senators Hillary Clinton and John Ensign. Their proposal calls for the establishment of an “Iraqi Oil Trust.”⁵⁰ If established, they suggest the result will be “the nation’s recovery and political reconciliation and instilling a sense of hope for the promise of democratic values.”⁵¹ By sharing the wealth of oil

revenues with Iraqi citizens, this process would “inhibit corruption,” instill the “responsibilities of citizenship,” and “transcend the divide among Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis.”⁵²

Recommendations

U.S. government intervention in Iraq will not end in the near term. One recommendation is for the President to formulate and execute a strategy as a follow-on to the surge. In order to establish lasting security to provide stability throughout the region, more U.S. armed forces will have to be deployed to support Iraqi plans for stability, transition, and reconstruction efforts. An increase of other U.S. government agency support must be deployed to Iraq to provide the new Iraqi government the tools of DIMEFIL that cannot be performed by the military element of national power. Without a comprehensive and coordinated U.S. government strategic effort, the long term outlook for avoiding widespread chaos in Iraq is bleak.

Another recommendation is for the Congress to exert their oversight responsibilities by the development of a bipartisan plan for success in Iraq. It is doubtful that a majority in Congress exists holding the belief that failure to secure and stabilize Iraq is a realistic option. This approach must be a jointly-developed plan between the Legislative and Executive Branches and must include all sovereign governments throughout the Middle East region. The plan must include the full spectrum of U.S. government, Coalition, and regional DIMEFIL efforts; it requires supporting the self determination of the Iraqi people. Without a plan for success, failure in Iraq is assured.

Conclusion

Regardless of the eventual outcome in Iraq, a withdrawal, either rapid or based on an established timeline, will likely prove disastrous for future U.S. foreign policy initiatives. Withdrawal without the establishment of security and without a comprehensive political solution will equal defeat for the U.S. This defeat will not be a military defeat, but will be a strategic defeat. Defeat will embolden U.S. enemies and will result in an extended period of turmoil throughout the Middle East. An Iraqi civil war will destabilize the established power centers in all the surrounding sovereign nations. The resulting power vacuum will lend itself to increased radical ideology and failed states. A withdrawal may provide a temporary respite from U.S. military-centric involvement in the Middle East, but will exacerbate the reality of the Long War for generations to come. “We should seize this moment and chart a course that places greater responsibility in the leaders and citizens of Iraq. It’s time to put our trust where our democratic values lie: in the Iraqi people.”⁵³

Endnotes

- ¹ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2d rev. ed., (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1991), 321.
- ² David E. Sanger and Michael R. Gordon, "Options Weighed for Surge in G.I.'s to Stabilize Iraq" *New York Times*, 16 December 2006, A1.
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